

# COSMOPOLITAN CHRONICLE

True tales from the annals of history, archaeology, construction, and restoration of the Casa de Bandini and Cosmopolitan Hotel.  
Old Town San Diego State Historic Park

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## Cosmo's Visitors

**Therese Muranaka**  
San Diego Coast District  
Associate State  
Archaeologist

Many historic preservation visitors have stopped by the Cosmopolitan Hotel since the archaeological work began: Seth Mallios, Anthropology professor at SDSU and his students; Lynne Christenson, San Diego County historian; Sue Wade, Colorado Desert archaeologist; Jackson Underwood archaeologist at RECON; Caltrans archaeologists Chris White, Deb Domenici, and Karen Crafts; Southern Service Center cultural staff Marla Mealey, Jim Newland and Patty McFarland; and old friends with the National Trust Western Leaders Linda Mayro and Bill Doelle. We look forward to each visit, as everyone sees something different, or has something unique to say. Some special 'VIP' guests have been park docents, and park employees, who are anxious to be able to "say the

right thing" to the people who come to Old Town on tours.

From my point of view, the most poignant tour was with USD History Chair, Molly McClain. Walking around the house one evening with two history professors, Molly and Iris Engstrand, we were talking about the only map known of the house, a plan done late in life by Mariano Vallejo. Especially in the areas that he labeled *Sala*, *Cuartos* and *SaGuan* (that is 'living room', 'rooms' and "hallway") with Molly, we reminisced about how she is a direct descendent of Vallejo. Vallejo's daughter, Prudenciana Lopez, and her husband Jose Matias Moreno, lived in Old Town and left one of the most historically valuable collections of letters about Old Town and northern Baja California life, a collection kept at the Huntington Library in San Marino.

As I thought about Vallejo as an old man drawing his Casa de Bandini map from memory, I also thought how much joy he would have watching his "granddaughter" (many gen-

erations removed) admiring his efforts. At that point in his life, realizing that the Rancho Era of California was lost, he must have made an effort to jot down a few details that might in their own way help the Californios remember who they are. As we peered down at the original flooring on which Vallejo must have walked and danced, I couldn't help but be amazed at the passage of time. Many people have asked, what's the best thing that I have ever found. I have to say that it is when a descendent comes face to face with the things their families once knew.

Some of our most recent guests have been a "gaze" (per San Diego Zoo website) of raccoons that left their footprints all over the floor, and a rodent that dug a hole into an archaeology test square, descendents themselves. It must be at night, when all of the scientists have packed up, that these early *Californios* return, and admire our handiwork.

